

Gatsby's Dream

Part A.

Directions: Chapters 5 and 6 dwell on the creation and reality of Gatsby's dream. Use the following questions to consider the qualities of that dream.

1. In chapter 5, when Daisy is at Gatsby's house, how does her presence affect his view of his own possessions?
2. A few paragraphs later, what does he say about the green light at the end of her dock?
3. When Nick is leaving, what does he see on Gatsby's face?
4. Near the beginning of chapter 6, what does Nick say about Gatsby's choice of name?
5. Later in chapter 6, what does Nick say about Gatsby's expectations from Daisy?

Part B.

Directions: Chapters 8 and 9 describe the shattering of Gatsby's dream. Use the following questions to consider his downfall.

1. The second half of chapter 8 provides many examples of the result of Gatsby's dream. Identify several of them.
2. In chapter 9, what are the final outcomes of Gatsby's dream?
3. What do you see as Gatsby's major mistakes?

Land of the Free, Home of the Brave

Directions: Read the following information about the American Dream. Then answer the questions that follow.

"For a transitory enchanted moment, man must have held his breath in the presence of this continent . . ." (Chapter 9).

The first settlers stepped off old world ships onto the shore of a new land, free to believe and manifest that belief, free to explore limitless space.

Their dreams were as expansive as the limitless land. Explorations stretching from coast to coast would eventually reach upward and outward to the moon and Mars.

It seemed that, in America, a person could realize an impossible dream. The dream was limited only by imagination and ambition. It was not limited by ancestry, social class, or wealth. Living in a seemingly limitless environment of land and natural resources and supported by freedoms of religion, speech, the press, privacy, mobility, and ownership, Americans presumed that all frontiers were within their grasp.

As the nation reached wider and higher, individuals confidently set their sights on political, economic, and personal accomplishments. These achievements were not available just for the asking. No frontiers were absolute. Claims to property, for example, were limited by counterclaims on the part of Indians, French, British, other settlers, big business, and government. Each freedom was bounded by the freedom of others. Therefore, the land of limitless opportunity was able to provide a means only to position but not prestige, to power but not praise, to the present but not the future, to objects but not their meaning, to persons but not their hearts, to a house but not a home, to a woman but not a wife, to space but not freedom, to entertainment but not friends, to money but not peace.

The 1920s opened up another kind of frontier, one of luxury and leisure. Gatsby was typical of the monied class whose pockets jingled. This Golden Age was short-lived, however, ending in the stock market crash and ensuing depression.

Some American dreams came true. Others became nightmares. The latter was true of James Gatz, whose dream of becoming Jay Gatsby came true. Pursuit of Daisy's heart was transformed into a fatal nightmare.

1. Do you think most Americans still have an American Dream?
2. Do you think people in other countries have an American Dream?
3. What is your dream for America?